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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/86, contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people, needs still unmet and proposals for responding to them. It describes efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions.

The reporting period is from May 2012 to April 2013. During this period, the Palestinian Authority continued to implement the National Development Plan for 2011-2013. The United Nations enhanced its support to those efforts through its Medium-Term Response Plan and its work with the Palestinian Authority to develop a United Nations Development Action Framework. The United Nations development programming includes capacity development, infrastructure and the provision of direct assistance and basic services. This work is focused on six strategic areas: (a) governance, human rights and rule of law; (b) education and culture; (c) livelihoods, food security and employment; (d) health care; (e) social protection; and (f) infrastructure, water and sanitation. The United Nations is engaged in over $2.9 billion of ongoing and planned development programmes in the State of Palestine, of which $1.2 billion was funded as at April 2012. This complements the humanitarian programming outlined in the 2013 Consolidated Appeals Process of $401.6 million.

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Direct negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel remained elusive during the reporting period. Unemployment and food insecurity increased and restrictions to movement remained in place, hindering development efforts. Improved socioeconomic conditions can be achieved only with sustainable, inclusive economic growth and job creation which, in turn, require further easing of movement and land and sea access.

During the reporting period, the United Nations continued its efforts to respond to development and humanitarian challenges in the context of occupation, focusing particularly on areas where the Palestinian Authority was least able to extend its services, namely, Gaza, and Area C and East Jerusalem of the West Bank.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/86, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people and an assessment of the needs still unmet and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. Also included is a summary of key political developments and challenges relevant to the reporting period, as the international community continued to work to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, as well as to support the State-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority and negotiations between the parties. The reporting period is from May 2012 to April 2013.

2. Information on the living and socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people is provided in several reports prepared by other United Nations agencies, in particular: (a) the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (to be issued); and (b) the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/67/13).

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several documents. The Consolidated Appeals Process for 2013, with a narrower focus than in previous years, is seeking $401.6 million to address the humanitarian needs by enhancing the protective environment and tackling food insecurity of the most vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip, Area C, including the seam zone, and East Jerusalem. The United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan presents the United Nations strategic response to Palestinian development priorities for the period 2011-2013, in alignment with the current Palestinian National Development Plan. UNRWA programme goals for the period 2010-2015 were reflected in the Agency's medium-term strategy, which was estimated at $655 million for 2011-2012, excluding emergency relief interventions. The Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 outlined priority development needs amounting to $2.468 billion.

4. Throughout the year, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority continued its efforts to support the peace process and to ensure effective coordination among the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel. The Office also continued to document the economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory and develop policies and programmes to improve them.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

5. Direct negotiations between the parties remain elusive. Quiet exchanges continued in an effort to create a conducive environment and return to talks. Following the Israeli elections on 22 January 2013, a new coalition Government was sworn in by the Knesset on 18 March 2013. In his first foreign trip of his second term, United States President Barack Obama visited Israel, the West Bank and Jordan from 20 to 23 March 2013. Secretary of State John Kerry returned to the region at the beginning of April for separate follow-up meetings with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, both of whom reiterated their commitment to a negotiated two-State solution. The renewed engagement by the United States of America marks an important opening towards breaking the political deadlock. It also offers an opportunity to mobilize consensus in the region and beyond, including through the Quartet, in support of reinvigorating efforts towards a two-State solution.

6. On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/19, accorded the State of Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations. On the same day, the Secretary-General stated that the vote underlined the urgency of a resumption of meaningful negotiations to ensure that an independent, sovereign, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine lives side by side with a secure State of Israel.

7. Following the adoption of the resolution, the Government of Israel announced that it would approve new plans for settlement construction of thousands of housing units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and that planning would proceed in the E-1 area of the West Bank. President Abbas stated that building in E-1, an area that is key for the contiguity of the West Bank, would cross what he described as a red line. Settler violence against Palestinians and their property, under the so-called price tag policy, as well as Palestinian attacks on Israelis in the West Bank continued to be of serious concern. Settlement activity is illegal under international law and runs counter to Israel's commitments under the road map. Israel should heed the calls of the international community to stop such activity.

8. Also following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/19, regular transfers of clearance revenue from Israel to the Palestinian Authority were disrupted, compounding its dire financial situation while facing a decrease in foreign aid, the failure of donor countries to fulfil their financial pledges and slowing economic activity in the State of Palestine. Delays resulted in the non-payment of Palestinian Authority employees, which triggered strikes and demonstrations. In addition to social unrest, the hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and the death of two Palestinian prisoners under Israeli custody sparked a series of popular demonstrations and clashes with Israeli security forces in the West Bank, which resulted in the death of 11 Palestinian protesters between September 2012 and April 2013 and hundreds of injuries. On the occasion of Palestinian Prisoners' Day, 17 April, some 3,000 prisoners went on hunger strike for the day and demonstrations were held in main West Bank cities. The United Nations remains concerned about the conditions of the prisoners on protracted hunger strike. The Secretary-General has urged that a solution be reached without delay, including by addressing all unresolved issues included in the May 2012 agreement. Although the Palestinian Authority continued to make progress in its State-building agenda, including the

organization of local elections in the West Bank, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee noted, at its meeting in Brussels on 19 March 2013, that such achievements might not be sustainable given the continued political impasse, the deteriorating reality on the ground, negative socioeconomic and security trends, and the dire fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority.

9. In a related development of note, on 13 April, President Abbas accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, who is expected to continue carrying out his functions as caretaker until a new Prime Minister is announced. The United Nations recognized that Prime Minister Fayyad had had to contend with circumstances that kept constraining the success of the State-building agenda he led together with President Abbas which, in the absence of a credible political horizon, was at serious risk.

10. In Gaza and southern Israel, a dangerous escalation of violence occurred in November 2012. Eight days of fighting resulted in an estimated 158 Palestinians killed, including 103 civilians, and some 1,269 Palestinians reportedly injured, while 6 Israelis, including 4 civilians, were reported killed by Palestinian rocket fire and 224 Israelis were injured, the vast majority civilians. A bomb attack in Tel Aviv on 21 November injured 23 civilians, 3 of them severely. The Egyptian-brokered ceasefire "understanding" of 21 November allowed for one of the longest periods without projectiles being fired from Gaza in recent years and tangible easing of the closure. However, rockets fired from Gaza on 26 February, 21 March and 2 and 7 April 2013 resulted in Israel's decision to rescind the extension of the fishing limit, bringing it back to 3 nautical miles from its original 6 nautical miles, and restricted travel by Palestinians and goods into and out of Gaza. In reaction to the shooting of rockets, Israel also closed the Kerem Shalom crossing from 8 to 11 April. Since 26 February, this crossing, which is the only passage for goods from Israel into Gaza, has been closed for 29 out of 56 days. International efforts continued, notably by Egypt, to solidify the calm, prevent the smuggling of weapons into Gaza, advance the lifting of the closure, and fully implement Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

11. The full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009) also entails overcoming the Palestinian political divide in ways that can advance the potential for a two-State solution. Egypt continued to facilitate the implementation of previous agreements, and a meeting between President Abbas and Khaled Meshaal was held on 10 January 2013 in Cairo. One of the results of that meeting was that the Palestinian Central Elections Commission was authorized to register some 240,000 new electors in Gaza, for the first time since 2007. The Chairman of the Commission has since declared that it is technically prepared to organize any election, once so decided. Hamas and Fatah have resumed informal working-level meetings but discussions on the implementation of existing agreements have advanced only a little. On 2 April, Khaled Meshaal was re-elected head of the Hamas Political Bureau. A day earlier, President Abbas reiterated his position, in accordance with the agreement signed at Doha in February 2012 that he was prepared to lead a technical interim government, which should prepare for elections 90 days into its term. The United Nations continued to support efforts to promote reconciliation under the leadership of President Abbas through Egyptian auspices and within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the positions of the Quartet, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

12. In spite of the lack of progress on negotiations, the renewed engagement by the United States and the stated recommitments by the parties to the two-State solution allow for a glimmer of hope, provided that this renewed engagement is followed up with determination. The parties must now show the political will to cooperate, with concerted action by the international community, including through the Quartet, and with the support of key Arab, regional and other stakeholders. The Palestinians have a legitimate right to their own independent State and Israel has the right to live in peace and security with its neighbours. There is no substitute for negotiations and no viable alternative to the two-State solution, making the resumption of meaningful talks all the more urgent.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

13. The Government of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad continued to implement key economic and fiscal reforms. Total revenues were 6 per cent lower than budget, while total expenditures and net lending were 12 per cent higher than their forecasts in 2012. Consequently, the year-end recurrent deficit was 55 per cent above its budget.

14. Real growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at 5.6 per cent in the West Bank and 6.6 per cent in the Gaza Strip in 2012.[1] This, however, reflected a slowdown in the economy since the real GDP was estimated at 10.7 per cent for 2011. Recent growth was driven by the services sector in the West Bank and by the construction sector in Gaza. There has not been enough growth in the productive sectors of the economy to be sustainable and absorb new entrants into the labour markets.

15. In this context, unemployment increased to 19 per cent in 2012 from 17.3 per cent in 2011 in the West Bank, and to 31 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2012, up from 28.7 per cent in 2011 in the Gaza Strip. Women and young people are particularly affected by the lack of jobs.[2] Palestine refugees are also affected, with a 2012 overall unemployment rate of 27.8 per cent compared with 19.8 per cent for the rest of the population.

16. Related to this absence of economic opportunities, poverty continues to affect large proportions of the population. A number of factors are also placing pressure on food security in the State of Palestine. The percentage of households facing food insecurity increased from 27 per cent in 2011 to 33.5 per cent in 2012 overall. Broken down by area, 57 per cent of households in Gaza and 19 per cent in the West Bank faced food insecurity in 2012[3]. In absolute terms, this translates into 1.5 million food-insecure Palestinians. The economic situation of the Palestinian Authority contributed to a deterioration in food security levels, reversing the

[1] See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts, Fourth Quarter, 2012" (March 2013), available from http://www.pcbs.gov.ps.

[2] See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force Survey (October-December 2012) Round (Q4/2012)", available from http://www.pcbs.gov.ps.

[3] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, forthcoming "2012 Socioeconomic and Food Security Survey Report".

improvement in food security gains witnessed in 2010 and 2011. Further reductions in poverty and improved food security can be achieved only with sustainable, inclusive economic growth and job creation which, in turn, require further easing of movement and access restrictions that currently hinder private sector activity.[4]

17. Given the limited size and purchasing power of the local market, the transfer of goods and services from Gaza to the West Bank and exports to Israel and beyond are key to expanding the State of Palestine's productive base, generating employment and reducing poverty. The tradable sectors of the economy, which are the most affected by the restrictions on movement and access, have shrunk over time, affecting the sustainability of any growth.

18. Concerns about the long-term prospects of the Palestinian economy continue to include the need for recovery of the private sector, a reduction in dependency on foreign aid, diversification of the economy, access to natural resources and removal of access restrictions on people and goods.

Humanitarian developments

19. During the reporting period, 258 Palestinians were killed (244 in Gaza, including 111 militants; 14 in the West Bank; overall, 48 children and 17 women) and 5,492 were injured (1,722 in Gaza; 3,770 in the West Bank; overall, 864 children and 118 women) by Israeli security forces. The number of killed and injured represents a significant increase compared with 101 fatalities and 2,215 injuries during the previous period, mostly as a result of the conflict in Gaza in November 2012. In the West Bank, growing settler violence towards Palestinians resulted in 144 injuries (including 32 children and 15 women) and damage to property. A total of 7 Israelis (including 4 civilians) were killed and 405 were injured during the reporting period, compared with 11 Israelis killed and 91 injured during the previous reporting period.

20. As at the end of February 2013, 236 Palestinian children between the ages of 12 and 17 years (including 39 between the ages of 12 and 15 years) were in Israeli detention for alleged security violations. Moreover, the February 2013 report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) entitled "Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and Recommendations" stated that the ill-treatment of children that come in contact with the military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized throughout the process, from the moment of arrest until the child's prosecution and eventual conviction and sentencing (see p. 1 of the report).

21. Demolitions of housing and livelihood assets continued. A total of 488 structures were demolished, displacing 714 persons, more than half of them children. A total of 3,327 persons have been affected by the demolitions of housing and livelihood assets.

[4] Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, "Palestinian State-building: an achievement at increased risk", Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Meeting, Brussels, 21 March 2012.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

22. Access to and movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, remained restricted. As at June 2012, there were approximately 542 closure obstacles inside the West Bank, 4 per cent more than in July 2011. Ongoing restrictions on Palestinian access to land, social services and economic opportunities in East Jerusalem and Area C hinder development efforts, resulting in deteriorating living conditions and increased vulnerability.

23. A number of easing measures implemented since mid-June 2012 at main checkpoints significantly reduced the time spent by some 15,000 Palestinians travelling to and from Jerusalem every day. However, more generally, access to the city by holders of West Bank identification cards continues to be restricted by the barrier, checkpoints and the permit system, whereby an entry permit issued by Israeli authorities that is often difficult to obtain is required.

24. As detailed in paragraph 10 above, in Gaza, there was a fluctuation in restrictions on land and sea access imposed by the Government of Israel following operation "Pillar of Defence" in November 2012.

25. Access and operational space for staff of humanitarian agencies remained restricted. From May 2012 to March 2013, there were 522 reported incidents of delayed or denied access of United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members at Israeli checkpoints. The majority of these incidents occurred as United Nations staff crossed the barrier on the Jerusalem periphery.

Barrier

26. Construction of the barrier continued in the north-west of the Bethlehem Governorate. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/17 of 24 January 2007 continued its outreach and claim intake activities. More than 36,000 claims and over 400,000 supporting documents were collected. Claim intake activities in the Tubas, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya and Salfit Governorates were completed and the work is well-advanced in the Ramallah Governorate. Outreach and claim intake activities in the Hebron Governorate have also been initiated.

27. Approximately 150 Palestinian communities have land isolated between the barrier and the Green Line and are obliged to use a "prior coordination" mechanism or obtain "visitor" permits from Israeli authorities to access their land. There was an increase in the number of permits issued during the last olive harvest but authorities still rejected many applications citing "security reasons" or insufficient proof of "connection to the land".

III. United Nations response

28. The United Nations system provided its support within the framework of the Palestinian National Development Plan and has been working closely with the Palestinian Authority in developing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine, a strategic planning framework that will guide United Nations development programming between 2014 and 2016 and align with

the forthcoming 2014-2016 Palestinian National Development Plan. The Framework places the Palestinian people at the centre of development programming with the aim to enhance human security, thereby setting the foundation for human development objectives in a context of occupation.

29. The humanitarian system responded effectively to the hostilities in Gaza in November 2012, during which the United Nations and its partners continued working to ensure, to the extent possible, that people were able to continue receiving food, other assistance and access to essential services. Only a few days after the ceasefire, programmes resumed and a rapid assessment of the humanitarian consequences of the hostilities was conducted, on the basis of which responsive programming was undertaken.

A. Human and social development

30. The vision of the United Nations for the State of Palestine is that all people can fully enjoy human rights, peace, prosperity, freedom and dignity in an independent and viable State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. United Nations agencies work to strengthen the capacity and resilience of people and institutions in government, civil society and the private sector, in pursuit of human security and sustainable human development for all people in the State of Palestine, within the framework of respect for the rule of law and human rights. The United Nations places special emphasis on furthering the State-building agenda and strengthening community resilience and steadfastness in the context of the ongoing occupation. The United Nations development programming includes capacity development, infrastructure and the provision of direct assistance and basic services. This work is focused on six strategic areas: (a) governance, human rights and rule of law; (b) education and culture; (c) livelihoods, food security and employment; (d) health care; (e) social protection; and (f) infrastructure, water and sanitation. The United Nations is engaged in over $2.9 billion of ongoing and planned development programmes in the State of Palestine, an estimated $1.2 billion of which was funded as at April 2012.

31. Illustrative examples of the types of assistance provided by the United Nations, are set out below.

Education

32. In 2012, UNRWA provided free education to 276,052 registered refugee students enrolled in 345 elementary and preparatory schools across the West Bank and Gaza, with an average occupancy of 34 and 39 students per class respectively. In Gaza, 91 per cent of schools currently operate on a double-shift system while in the West Bank, only 6 per cent are temporarily on the double-shift system to accommodate new school construction.

33. Nine United Nations agencies supported the Ministry of Education through the "Education for All" package for inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development. Pilot schools (32 schools in the West Bank and 14 schools in Gaza) benefited from school-feeding and capacity development programmes. For the first time, the Ministry of Education opened preschool classrooms in eight of the pilot schools in the West Bank. UNICEF also continued to support the construction of preschool classrooms in Gaza.

34. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNRWA continued collaboration on a Gaza initiative whereby 335 over-age students[5] (86 girls and 249 boys) were enrolled in six-month training courses tailored to job market demands and culturally accessible jobs for women. The agencies organized six-month apprenticeship placements in a field relevant to the students who completed vocational training.

35. Within its child-friendly school approach, UNICEF supported the capacity development of education supervisors on active learning strategies and techniques and the training of 1,600 educators in active learning methods.

36. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme continued to implement the Al Fakhoura Scholarship Programme for Gazan students. UNDP also supported the construction of schools and worked towards assessing the education needs of the Palestinian population, drawing on poverty scoring and livelihood assessments under the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme as well as community assessments carried out for the Community Resilience and Development Programme for Area C and East Jerusalem.

Health care

37. UNRWA continued to operate 42 health-care facilities, 21 health points and five mobile clinics in the West Bank, employing over 2,000 staff. Nearly 30,000 refugees in the West Bank received assistance for hospital-care costs. In Gaza, UNRWA operated 21 primary health-care centres, serving 1.2 million refugees. These also serve as one-stop centres to address gender-based violence, where clients access health care, psychosocial support and legal aid in one easily accessible location.

38. The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, finalized the National Health Information System assessment and strategy. It also continued to support the establishment of a National Institute of Public Health to build core public health functions, including strengthening surveillance systems and registries, developing capacity in analysis of hospital health-care management, commissioning and conducting applied public health research, and increasing the effective use of data for setting health-care policies and priorities.

39. WHO also continued to support quality improvement in service delivery by conducting capacity development training for Ministry of Health staff. In Gaza, it continued to implement programmes to improve the quality and safety of childbirth care at the seven main public hospitals. WHO also continued to provide technical assistance to maintain the functioning of public health-care services and helped in coordinating the import of medical supplies to Gaza.

40. WHO continued its programme to support East Jerusalem hospitals, which serve as the main referral centres for tertiary care for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. It also continued to support the hospitals' efforts to achieve Joint

[5] The term "over-age student" refers to students who are older than the typical age for their corresponding grade.

Commission International accreditation in 2013 and to institutionalize the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network.

41. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the rehabilitation, equipping and capacity development of maternity and primary health-care centres in an effort to improve the quality of obstetric-care provision and reproductive health-care services at the secondary and primary levels. In addition, UNFPA continued to support the institutionalization of a maternal mortality surveillance system. UNICEF supported improved health-care services through mobile clinics in 29 communities in the Jordan Valley and Area C.

42. UNICEF supported the capacity-building of 259 doctors and nurses in health-care centres and emergency wards in the area of community-based integrated management of childhood illnesses. It also trained 200 health-care workers in the introduction of new vaccines and the updated national expanded programme for immunizations, maintaining high immunization rates among the most vulnerable communities. UNICEF also supported the post-natal home visits programme, which reached around 3,000 at-risk mothers and newborns, and referred those in need for specialized care at health-care facilities.

Employment

43. UNDP started the second phase of the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme, targeting 12,000 families living below the national poverty line. The first phase of the programme graduated 7,000 families from deep poverty and created 12,000 sustainable employment opportunities.

44. UNDP and ILO continued to support the Technical Advisory Unit at the Ministry of Labour in efforts to implement effective labour market policies.

45. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) continued a programme which provided income generation and self-employment opportunities in food processing and marketing for women in 41 women's centres. The programme directly benefited 536 women workers, and over 35,800 women benefited from the services provided at the centres. The activity also benefited more than 258 schools and over 100,000 schoolchildren who receive healthy and affordable snacks made by women from the community-based centres, contributing to improved health of the community.

Targeted social protection

46. UNRWA distributed 140,569 food parcels and $1.4 million in supplementary cash assistance to nearly 11,889 households through its special hardship cases programme in the West Bank. In Gaza, it distributed 426,161 food parcels to 21,626 households, along with $6.7 million in cash assistance through the social safety net programme.

47. ILO provided technical assistance to the newly established National Wage Committee, which helped to secure approval of a minimum wage by the Palestinian Authority. It also continued its support to the establishment of an integrated social security system in the State of Palestine by providing assistance to tripartite stakeholders in the development of a social security system for the private sector.

Culture

48. After yearly requests by the World Heritage Committee since 2010 for a technical mission of experts to examine the state of conservation of the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls, the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reached an agreement on 23 April 2013 to send a mission of experts to Israel in mid-May 2013.

49. UNESCO continued to lead a multi-agency programme on culture and development funded through the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund in the areas of cultural heritage norms and legislation, inventorying intangible heritage, conservation and planning for potential world heritage sites.

50. UNESCO also continued to support the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to enable sound representation of Palestinian cultural and natural sites, particularly after the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route in Bethlehem was the first Palestinian site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List in June 2012. It also continued to support the construction of the visitor's centre at the Tell Balata Archaeological Park in Nablus.

51. Through a partnership with the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem and the Islamic University of Gaza, UNESCO is supporting construction efforts for the conservation of the archaeological site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer, south of Gaza City.

Food security and agriculture

52. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported roughly 1,000 women and 3,700 farmers and their associations to achieve improved economic conditions and food security through the provision of agricultural inputs, skills training and marketing support. FAO also assisted more than 3,800 male-headed households and 1,900 female-headed households in the West Bank and Gaza to safeguard their assets and expand their livelihoods. Its interventions also focused on empowering women as agents of development in their homes and communities.

53. UNDP, through its rural development programme, directly enhanced the productivity of at least 4,000 hectares of agricultural land and established services and infrastructure that encouraged farmers to cultivate and utilize an additional 7,000 hectares using private investments.

Human rights, women, children and youth

54. The United Nations continued to mainstream human rights into all of its work and to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Authority in human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) worked closely with the Palestinian Authority on the ongoing process of preparing a national action plan on human rights, which will be an integral part of the forthcoming National Development Plan. OHCHR also worked with the Palestinian Authority to strengthen its administrative capacity, with a view towards becoming a State party to the core international human rights conventions, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. OHCHR continued its work with the Independent Commission for Human Rights and with

non-governmental organization partners though capacity-building activities focused on monitoring human rights violations and advocacy skills.

55. WHO continued to lead advocacy efforts on the right to health, focus on, inter alia, access of referral patients to specialized care in East Jerusalem hospitals and outside the State of Palestine. Fewer Gazan patients had their permits to exit denied or delayed in 2012: 7.5 per cent in 2012, down from 10.2 per cent in 2011 and 40 per cent in 2006.

56. In late 2012, United Nations agencies organized a 16-day awareness-raising campaign to educate young people on gender-based violence. There were approximately 3,339 participants in UNRWA's campaign activities. More broadly, the UNRWA family and child protection programme reached more than 10,000 refugees in a wide variety of community-awareness and prevention activities. UNDP enhanced the national responses and capacities to address gender-based violence through the development and delivery of a training curriculum and by developing the capacities of 229 judges, lawyers, law students and prosecutors to deal with gender-based violence cases. UNFPA supported the development of a manual on gender-based violence with the Ministry of Health and increased the capacity of national health-care providers in managing gender-based violence cases. In addition, UNFPA built the capacity of community-based organizations to document violations relating to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

57. UN-Women continued to support 49 women's centres across the West Bank and Gaza, including the building, rehabilitation and activation of 8 new community-based women's centres that offer a wide range of psychosocial, legal and social services. In Gaza, UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, supported the establishment and operation of the first comprehensive service centre for women victims of violence, the Hayat Centre, through which 125 women benefited from psychological, social and legal services.

58. Acting under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs, UN-Women continued to support the Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families, which hosted and protected a monthly average of 20 women and their children from violence and provided a range of social and legal services.

59. UN-Women worked with the Palestinian Bar Association to provide legal support and representation to women inmates in the Correction and Rehabilitation Centres and to women victims of violence and with the Correction and Rehabilitation Centre Department in developing and implementing rehabilitation activities for female inmates.

60. The young women leaders programme in Gaza implemented through the UNRWA Gender Initiative is aimed at closing a skills gap in the labour market by ensuring that women are developing skills demanded by the labour market through theoretical and practical training courses, work placement schemes and small- and medium-enterprise training. In 2012, 700 women received training under the programme.

61. UNICEF supported psychosocial emergency teams and family centres, which reached over 46,000 children (in addition to 20,112 parents and caregivers) to mitigate the effect of trauma and to alleviate psychosocial distress and strengthen resilience in the West Bank and Gaza.

62. With the support of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, six non-governmental organization partners and the Higher Council of Palestinian Youth and Sport provided opportunities for over 31,200 adolescents to develop their capacities, skills and knowledge and provided psychosocial support through 56 safe spaces in the West Bank and Gaza.

Environment, housing and urban development

63. FAO, in cooperation with local communities and the Ministry of Agriculture, supported the rehabilitation and greening of roughly 2,000 dunums of rangeland in the southern West Bank in 2012.

64. UNDP provided support for adequate housing to nearly 80 low-income families through rehabilitation and renovation interventions in Jerusalem. In addition, UNDP provided support to improve the economic infrastructure by enhancing the physical situation of a number of shops and business facilities.

65. UNDP supported land protection and development in Area C, along with the Ministry of Agriculture, that served to establish infrastructure for cultivating land (roads, harvesting schemes, increased water storage capacities, reclaiming of unused land) and helped to protect thousands of hectares from confiscation and provide sustainable income to more than 8,000 rural families.

66. UNDP and FAO continued to improve access to and quality of water. FAO established more than 1,200 community and household-level rainwater harvesting cisterns to improve water availability and water rationing through resource management. UNDP continued to support the development of the wastewater sector and regenerate natural reserves in Gaza.

67. UNRWA in Gaza completed the first phase of the Saudi Arabia rehousing project, which included 752 new shelters for families who lost their homes owing to the conflict.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

68. The 2013 Consolidated Appeal Process for the State of Palestine is seeking $401.6 million. This figure was increased from the $374.3 million requested in the initial published Consolidated Appeal Process document to take into account the additional needs in Gaza arising from the escalation of hostilities in Gaza and southern Israel in November 2012. Humanitarian assistance under the Consolidated Appeal Process focuses on tackling entrenched levels of food insecurity, serious protection and human rights issues and the limited access of vulnerable Palestinian communities to essential services, particularly in Gaza, East Jerusalem, Area C of the West Bank and the seam zone. The 2013 Consolidated Appeal Process represents a reduction in requirements compared with the 2012 Process, which requested a revised amount of $419.9 million. To date, the 2012 Consolidated Appeal Process has received 71 per cent ($297.6 million) of its requested funds. In addition, the UNRWA Emergency Appeal is requesting $300 million to meet the needs of some 2 million Palestine refugees in Gaza and the West Bank.

69. During and in the immediate aftermath of the November 2012 hostilities, the United Nations Mine Action Service undertook emergency risk assessments of all destroyed and damaged bridges, schools, family centres and key infrastructure

across Gaza and held risk-awareness campaigns concerning explosive remnants of war with partners. Between January and March 2013, the Mine Action Service supported demolitions of explosive remnants of war, destroying over 1,000 of them.

Emergency food support

70. UNRWA provided more than 21,865 individuals (3,163 households) with emergency food assistance in the West Bank. UNRWA and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued their joint assistance programme for refugee and non-refugee Bedouin herders in the West Bank, reaching at least 27,414 individuals (4,458 households) with four rounds of food rations during the reporting period.

71. In Gaza, UNRWA delivered an additional 526,382 emergency food aid parcels to nearly 140,000 refugee families, benefiting 748,040 abject or absolute poor individuals. UNRWA provided a total volume of 66,000 metric tons of staple food to the poorest refugees in 2012, including more than 48,000 metric tons of flour procured locally.

Emergency income generation

72. Across the West Bank and Gaza, the UNRWA job creation programme provided 29,991 refugees with job opportunities, creating 1.9 million job days of employment, injecting $26,875,625 into food-insecure/food-vulnerable households and reaching a total of 188,531 beneficiaries (hired workers and their families).

Emergency health support

73. WHO continued to monitor shortages of drugs and disposables, led efforts to fill gaps in supplies and assisted in coordinating the import of medical supplies donated to Gaza. It also provided spare parts and technical assistance to maintain, repair and improve existing equipment and procured medical supplies and equipment to meet essential needs in the public health system in Gaza. WHO and partners provided emergency supplies of critical drugs and disposables needed for treatment of the injured during the escalation in hostilities in Gaza in November 2012. In addition, UNICEF delivered 43 lifesaving paediatric drugs and consumables to cover the needs of Ministry of Health primary health-care facilities for three to six months. It also procured 30 types of essential drugs for a caseload of 15,000 sick children.

74. In the West Bank, UNRWA operated six mobile clinic teams, which served 55 of the most remote or vulnerable communities with essential primary health care. The teams provided an average of more than 12,000 patient consultations a month and covered a population of approximately 120,000 refugees as well as non-refugees. The clinics are closely coordinated with other mobile health-care providers, including the Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations.

75. UNRWA provided community mental health-care support to 49 vulnerable Bedouin communities in the West Bank, covering a population of approximately 10,500 individuals. The teams provided individual and group counselling, family support, psychosocial activities for men, women and children, and facilitated training programmes for community leaders.

Emergency water and sanitation support

76. UNICEF supported water networks improvement, benefiting 300 families in underserved communities in the West Bank and resulting in decreased spending on water and increased access to water for 958 students.

77. In Gaza, in coordination with the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, UNICEF supported the installation of four desalination units expected to provide access to desalinated water to 35,000 people.

78. In partnership with the Italian non-governmental organization Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (Civil Volunteers' Group) and the French non-governmental organization Action contre la faim, UNICEF's installation of water storage tanks and mobile latrines benefited 2,531 families (161 in Area C and 2,370 in the Access Restricted Area of Gaza). Over 1,100 people in access restricted areas have increased awareness on hygiene practices and cleaning household tanks. Around 390 male and female teachers in the access restricted areas benefited from training of trainers and were able to reach 5,000 students with lessons on good hygiene practices.

79. UNICEF supported the provision of emergency fuel to run generators, wells and pumping stations, benefiting at least 800,000 people in Gaza. In response to the Gaza crisis, UNICEF supported the repairs of 161 damaged generators and the rehabilitation of the water and wastewater networks in Gaza, benefiting at least 189,000 people, including 95,000 children.

80. UNRWA supported solid waste removal in 9 camps, provided public water infrastructure repairs and upgrades in 10 refugee camps and ensured water quality testing was undertaken in all 19 camps in the West Bank.

81. UNRWA supported water and sanitation service providers operating outside refugee camps to procure sufficient quantities of fuel and other supplies in Gaza. Such interventions were critical owing to persisting electricity outages. In 2012, 581,593 litres of fuel were distributed to municipalities, Solid Waste Management Councils and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility to ensure the continuity of water and sanitation services and treat mosquito breeding sites.

Emergency agriculture support

82. FAO distributed more than 2,200 tons of animal fodder, drought-tolerant seeds and shrubs, seedlings and vaccines, benefiting roughly 2,200 herding families in 2012, in order to protect the livelihoods of Palestinian farmers.

83. FAO continued to monitor the vulnerability of small-scale farmers to economic, political, and climatic shocks and to support appropriate responses. It provided 20,000 vaccines to vaccinate all cattle in Gaza and 85 traps for plant disease to farmers. In addition, training was provided to 10 agronomists and 250 farmers in order to build their capacity in identifying and responding to animal and plant diseases.

Emergency education support

84. In response to the crisis in Gaza in November 2012, UNICEF continued to repair 94 damaged schools and provide learning materials. Mine risk education

materials were produced to raise the awareness of more than 273,000 children on unexploded ordnances through Government schools and community centres in Gaza.

85. UNICEF improved the learning environment for 53,000 children, including 20,929 girls, through the rehabilitation of 21 schools (7 in the West Bank and 14 in Gaza) and the provision of learning materials. Educational supplies were pre-positioned to respond to the needs of over 40,000 children. Over 3,000 children, including 1,434 girls, in the West Bank safely accessed school through UNICEF's support for the operation of school vehicles, including the provision of 12 new vehicles and protective accompaniment.

Emergency housing support

86. Between May 2012 and April 2013, UNRWA provided emergency assistance, including cash assistance, to 46 families (285 individuals) affected by house demolitions.

87. UNRWA provided assistance to refugees whose homes had been damaged or destroyed during the hostilities in November 2012. Over $1.7 million in cash assistance was provided to 2,735 families (16,685 direct beneficiaries) for self-help minor repairs. In addition, 171 families received transitional cash assistance (over $150,000) and will continue to receive this allowance designed to help families displaced from their homes. A total of 11 shelters were opened for a brief period of time.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

88. The United Nations maintained support to the Palestinian Authority's efforts to improve the collection of revenue and accelerate customs clearance procedures. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) renewed an ongoing collaboration with the Palestinian Customs Authority to modernize and strengthen its existing systems. UNCTAD initiated efforts to strengthen the economic modelling and forecasting capacity of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics is now officially using UNCTAD's macroeconometric model for forecasting.

89. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) also continued its programme of support to enhance the operational capacity of the Palestinian Civil Police through training programmes, the provision of equipment, information management systems development and infrastructure development.

90. UN-Women and UNDP supported the adoption of the 2011-2019 National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women. UN-Women provided technical assistance to the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice to establish mechanisms and standards to expand access by women to justice and security sectors and protection services. UN-Women and UNDP worked with the Palestinian Civil Police and the Family Protection Units to develop their capacity in prevention and response to family violence and protection for victims.

91. ILO continued to support the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Labour through capacity-building programmes on occupational health and safety.

92. With ongoing support from UNICEF over the past few years, the amended Child Law was signed into force by President Abbas in December 2012; the amended law allows for additional protection to children and reinforces the legislative framework of front-line child protection professionals. A new law to protect children in conflict with the law and a child justice framework were also approved by the Cabinet. The "Policy of Nonviolence and Enhancing Discipline in Schools" was endorsed, with UNICEF support, overcoming significant challenges owing to the administrative divide between the West Bank and Gaza.

93. Support by the United Nations Mine Action Service to the Palestinian Authority included seeking modalities to begin the clearance of non-operational minefields in the West Bank. The Service contributed to the establishment of the Palestinian Mine Action Centre within the Ministry of the Interior, for which the Mine Action Service acts as technical advisor.

94. UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, assisted the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs in conducting capacity development activities for the staff of the Ministry and of the Gender Unit of 12 Palestinian ministries in legal literacy on international and national legal mechanisms to protect women's rights in the State of Palestine.

95. UN-Women provided technical support for the protection of women against violence and the monitoring of human rights violations by enhancing the capacity of the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs in the adoption of international human rights standards. It also supported the establishment of an observatory on access to justice for women.

96. UN-Women provided technical support to various Palestinian ministries to ensure that gender was mainstreamed in budgets, development planning strategies and capacity-building activities to support monitoring, evaluation and reporting. UNDP also trained 314 local government staff in 15 districts on mainstreaming gender standards in district planning and budgeting.

D. Private sector development

97. UNRWA financed 14,500 loans valued at $21.03 million to Palestinian businesses and households in 2012. Women and young people received 35 per cent and 33 per cent of these loans respectively. The programme in the State of Palestine continued to run on an operationally self-sufficient and sustainable basis and earned a net income of $1 million from its microfinance operations.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

98. Under the auspices of the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process/United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, collaboration and coordination among the numerous donor and United Nations forums was strengthened during the reporting period. The humanitarian country team in Jerusalem and the Operational Coordination Group in Gaza met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. With the support of the Coordination Unit within UNSCO, the United Nations country team continued to coordinate its programming within the United

Nations Medium-Term Response Plan and began the development of the United Nations Development Action Framework in alignment with the Palestinian development priorities. Efforts to forge constructive partnerships among the United Nations, the Palestinian Authority and the broader aid community were strengthened. The United Nations continued preparation of Ad Hoc Liaison Committee reports on a biannual basis, strategies for East Jerusalem and Area C and, together with other humanitarian actors, the development of a Consolidated Appeal Process for humanitarian action.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

99. In 2012, the Palestinian Authority struggled to meet its financial obligations, since expenditures were higher than expected, revenue was less than projected, and external financing fell short of the budget target. This led the Palestinian Authority to accumulate approximately $578 million in arrears to the private sector, the pension system and civil servant wages and to increase its stock of debt to domestic banks to $1.4 billion by the end of 2012. The external financing requirement for 2013 is estimated at $1.4 billion. Timely donor support to bridge this gap, combined with the transparent and unhindered flow of clearance revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, will be essential to meeting financial obligations in the coming year.

Donor coordination

100. The local aid coordination structure continued to serve as a key forum for donors and the Palestinian Authority. The coordination of humanitarian assistance and advocacy continued to be led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat.

101. Two meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee were held during the reporting period, in New York on 23 September 2012 and in Brussels on 19 March 2013.

V. Unmet needs

102. The 2012 Consolidated Appeal Process requested a revised amount of $419.9 million to tackle the most urgent humanitarian needs, of which 71 per cent was funded. Despite the generous response from donors, funding was uneven across clusters with some funds arriving late in the year, thereby affecting the delivery of some of the most urgent programmes. The 2013 Consolidated Appeal Process is currently requesting $401.6 million, of which 30 per cent was funded as at 4 April 2013 (including $8.2 million received from the Central Emergency Response Fund). Except for the education sector, which has not received any funds to date, funding levels across clusters and sectors is fairly even. However, over half of the funds received are still waiting to be allocated to specific clusters and sectors.

103. Additional support is also urgently needed for the UNRWA core budget, which faces a shortfall of $67.2 million for 2013, as well as its 2012 Emergency Appeal for $300 million, which has a $220 million shortfall.

104. United Nations agencies are seeking $1.6 billion to support planned multi-annual development interventions, including the reconstruction of Gaza, in the context of the United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan. This funding would complement the $1.2 billion of ongoing United Nations recovery and development projects in Gaza and the West Bank.

VI. Challenges

105. During the reporting period, restrictions on movement and access, demolitions of Palestinian infrastructure and associated displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have all increased. Furthermore, significant settlement activity continues to take place in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, heightening tension on the ground. Economic growth will require a revitalization of the private sector and a further easing of restrictions on movement and access.

106. The United Nations received approval for an estimated $77.4 million worth of United Nations projects by the Israeli authorities during the reporting period, including 449 housing units, 14 schools and 23 infrastructure and community development projects. This brings the total approved since March 2012 to $400 million. During this same period, $33 million worth of projects were rejected by Israeli authorities owing to the proposed location of the projects.

107. Continued and predictable support to the Palestinian Authority's budget is necessary to finance the current deficit and ensure stability of the ongoing reform efforts.

VII. Conclusions

108. The challenging operational context for the work of the United Nations in the reporting period remained unchanged, while threats to the livelihoods of Palestinians, particularly demolitions in Area C and the continued restrictions and divisions of Gaza, continue to pose formidable obstacles to development in the State of Palestine. Despite modest improvements, persistently high unemployment and food insecurity in Gaza, the rise in demolitions, the continued closure and restrictions on the movement of people and goods all hinder sustainable progress. The United Nations will continue working towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.